

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4618

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 6311

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PDIP PFOR MT AS

SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON NEW AUSTRALIAN HIGH
COMMISSIONER TO MALTA

REF: VALLETTA 0935

1. THE NEW AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO MALTA, CAREER FSO JOHN MILL MCMILLAN, WAS BORN IN MELBOURNE, VICTORIA ON DECEMBER 18, 1913. HE GRADUATED FROM MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY WITH A BACHELOR OF LAWS DEGREE. ENTERING THE DEPT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS IN 1937, MCMILLAN WAS A THIRD SECRETARY IN THE POLITICAL SECTION UNTIL 1941. HE SERVED AS THIRD SECRETARY IN WASHINGTON DURING 1941-43 AND FROM 1943 TO 1946 AS SECOND SECRETARY IN MOWCOW. AFTER FURTHER SERVICE IN CANBERRA, HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO KARACHI AS FIRST SECRETARY IN MARCH 1948, REMAINING THERE UNTIL OCTOBER 1949 WHEN HE BECAME FIRST SECRETARY IN PARIS. HE WAS SHORTLY THEREAFTER REASSIGNED TO MOWCOW WHERE, UNTIL OCTOBER 1953, HE ACTED AS CHARGE D'AFFAIRES. HE BECAME OUNSELOR IN THE WESTERN BRANCH OF THE EXTERNAL AFFAIS DEPARTMENT IN 1954, HOLDING THIS POSITION UNTIL HE WAS POSTED AS COUNSELOR TO JAKARTA IN 1956.

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HE RETURNED TO CANBERRA IN 1958, WHERE HE HEADED THE

PROTOCOL AND CONSULAR BRANCH AND WAS ACTING CHIEF OF PROTOCOL UNTIL HIS APPOINTMENT AS HEAD OF THE INFORMATION BRANCH IN 1959. IN 1960 HE WAS APPOINTED AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL. HE RETURNED TO CANBERRA IN 1962 AS CHIEF OF PROTOCOL. SINCE 1965 HE HAS SERVED AS AMBASSADOR TO BRAZIL (1965-70) AND HIGH COMMISSIONER TO GHANA (1970-73). HE HAS SERVED AS AMBASSADOR TO TURKEY SINCE 1973 AND CONCURRENTLY AS AMBASSADOR TO THE VATICAN (AS THE CLOSEST CATHOLIC, NON-DIVORCED AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR).

2. MCMILLAN MARRIED THE FORMER BEATRICE SCOBIE IN 1948; THEY HAVE ONE DAUGHTER, NOW ABOUT 22. MCMILLAN IS FOND OF THE THEATER AND BALLET. HIS DAUGHTER'S CURRENT EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT WITH A TURK WHOM THEY DO NOT LIKE HAS CAUSED BOTH MCMILLAN AND HIS WIFE SOME DISTRESS.

3. MCMILLAN IS A FAIRLY TYPICAL AUSTRALIAN EXTROVERT ALTHOUGH HE LACKS THE USUAL AUSTRALIAN ENTHUSIASM FOR SPORT. HE WAS DESCRIBED BY EMBASSY OFFICIALS IN CANBERRA AS BASICALLY A FRIENDLY AND COOPERATIVE COLLEAGUE, ALTHOUGH AN INTELLECTUAL LIGHTWEIGHT WHO HAD THE REPUTATION OF BEING A PHENOMENAL BUCK-PASSER. MCMILLAN IS DISTINCTLY PRO-AMERICAN AND THOROUGHLY IN ACCORD WITH WESTERN POINTS OF VIEW ON MAJOR ISSUES. MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF HERE HAVE COMPLAINED PRIVATELY TO EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT MCMILLAN IS NOT AT ALL HARD DRIVING AND EVEN AT TIMES DOES NOT CARE ABOUT REPORTING BEYOND THE NECESSARY MINIMUM. HE PAYS LITTLE ATTENTION TO DETAIL, AND IS PROBABLY WINDING DOWN AFTER HIS LONG CAREER. THIS IS PERHAPS DUE TO HIS AWARENESS THAT EVEN AS ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MORE SENIOR AMBASSADORS, TOP POSTS WILL NOT BE COMING HIS WAY. THEREFORE, HE IS COASTING SOMEWHAT. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE IS A DELIGHTFUL, SENSIBLE AND EXPERIENCED COLLEAGUE. MACOMBER

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